

The Virgin Islands Consortium

St. Croix's Giving Spirit Results in Large Collection of Toys for Children, Hot Meals for the Homeless

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Kia Griffith **December 23, 2021**



Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity brothers presentation of toys and food items to The Women's Coalition on December 17. By. FILE PHOTO

Members of the Epsilon Iota Sigma Chapter of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. hosted a Holiday Happiness Drive on St. Croix that yielded a plethora of toys and food items to donate to three deserving recipients: The Women's Coalition of St. Croix, Department of Human Services Division of Children and Family Services (Foster Care Unit), and The Collective Collaboration.

The Holiday Happiness Drive took place on December 11 and 18 at both K-Mart West and The Market STX. The St. Croix community showed up and showed out by helping the brothers of Phi Beta Sigma meet their quotas for donations and then some. Four hundred and seventy-five toys (for children ages 4 months to 18 years) were received as well as full meals consisting of ham, turkey, vegetables, mac and cheese and juices.

The St. Croix community helped the brotherhood meet their quota by the first day of the drive, so an excess of toys was received. "To say that they gave us a generous donation is really an understatement because we had persons that saw us at K-Mart West, bought toys there, and then drove up to The Market STX just to buy more food. It was really an outpouring of love and appreciation from our community to persons that might be having a hard time this holiday season," said Phi Beta Sigma member Rick Grant.

"The extra gifts, we are giving out to persons in the community. The gifts that we collected, we will be giving out to employees of DOH to make their families a little happier this season," said Mr. Grant.

On December 17, The Women's Coalition received 15 care packages of food and toys to give to their clients. The Collective Collaboration received their food items on December 21 so they could prepare hot meals for the homeless population that they serve. DHS will get their quota of toys on December 23.

"We are so thankful that these men got together and decided that they wanted to do something for families impacted by violence. The donations they gave went a long way to help families have a wonderful Christmas," said Women's Coalition Director Clema Lewis with much gratitude in her expressions.

Collective Collaboration founder and president Karen Dickenson said, "The donations benefit the people that we serve by providing meals and nourishment daily. [From] every food donation, we're able to provide nutritious meals for people who otherwise wouldn't know where they would get a meal from." Ms. Karen also shared that once the community can collaborate, we can curb homelessness in the V.I. and everywhere.

The brotherhood hopes to put on the food and toy drive next holiday season, making it an annual event.

The Epsilon Iota Sigma Chapter of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Inc. was chartered in 1970. They live by the principles of brotherhood, scholarship, and service. Their motto is "Culture for Service and Service for Humanity." On an annual basis, the brotherhood hosts a Men's Health Expo and participate in the American Cancer Society's Relay for Life.